291 [302] of the chalats. By way of headgear the women frequently wear a round flat cap. Very young girls usually go unveiled; they wear a tibeteika very much like that of the man. The manner of dressing their hair is very attractive. It is worn in innumerable plaits into which black ribbons are worked, from the ends of which small silver bells are suspended.

As in all other Islamic countries only the women of the towns strictly observe the custom of veiling. When working in the fields the peasant-woman wears neither long cloak nor veil. When she goes to town, however, to sell her cotton at the market, she dons cloak and veil.

286 [234] Throughout the centuries of Turkestan's history the textile crafts have maintained a considerable standard. That is natural enough as the country produces all the more important textile fibres itself. Wool was indeed used but little in the manufacture of clothing, sheep being mainly bred for slaughter, as well as for the sake of their skin, which is known as "karakul". The best kind, the skin of unborn lambs, fetches a very high price, particularly in certain colours. Silk and cotton growing have always been of great importance in Turkestan, and flourish to this day (see ill. page 1445).[1] The two principal kinds of cotton grown are Gossypium herbaceum and Gossypium hirsutum. In 1910 over 410,000 tons of cotton were grown on an area of about 940,000 acres. Silk growing was entirely in the hands of women. Its yields were always considerable, though no statistics are available.

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[1] [See col 116, p 36 -- Analyst]

4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

•236 The most valuable textile material which the Turkomans and Kirghiz use, is that which their herds provide. A camel yields twenty or thirty pounds of wool, which is simply plucked out when the animals shed their winter coats; only neck, throat, and chin have to be shorn. Goats yield two to three pounds of wool once a year, sheep are shorn twice a year, the winter wool amounting to about 10 lbs, the summer crop to about 3 lbs.

286 Wool which is designed for weaving is first carded by the women by means of a comb-like instrument, and is then spun by hand, the spindle being rolled rapidly along the spinner's thigh, a method also common in India. The spindle used by the Turkoman women has a whorl attached to its upper end, that of the Kirghiz women has the whorl at the lower end. The spun thread is braided into cords, or woven into belts, ribbons or broad bands, and made into horses' harness. As everywhere in East and West Turkestan narrow, patterned ribbons are made by board-weaving. At this task two women work simultaneously, one of them turning the boards, the other passing the threads through the shed.

The two most interesting textile techniques of the nomads of Turkestan are without doubt the felting of unspun wool and the manufacture of textiles in the manner of carpet knotting. Both of these are discussed in the following article. 1

1

1[cat. 116, pp. 65-81--Analyst]

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